

ANNUAL REPORT 2025





**Ethnic Communities'
Council of NSW**

REPRESENTING ALL COMMUNITIES

ABN: 66 291 586 945

221 Cope Street Waterloo NSW 2017

Tel: (02) 9319 0288

Email: admin@eccnsw.org.au

www.eccnsw.org.au



CONTENTS

Messages of Support	2
Chair's Message	4
Chief Executive Officer's Message	6
About Us	8
Key Achievements	10
50th Anniversary Gala Dinner	11
Bin Trim Networks Program	14
Colonoscopy - Why Not? Project	15
Digital Media & Communications Project	16
Community Road Safety Project	18
Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Initiative	19
Inner West Sector Support & Development (IWSSD)	21
Safe Places for Faith Communities	25
SETS (Settlement Engagement & Transition Support) Program	26
Energy Advocacy	27
Speak My Language (Disability) Program	28
Tech Savvy for Seniors (TSS) Program	30
Vote Talk Program	32
Financial Report 2024-2025	34
Board of Directors	36
Members' Forum	39
Staff	40

MESSAGES OF SUPPORT



In 1975, representatives from ethnic communities across NSW stood alongside former Prime Ministers Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser at Sydney Town Hall, united by a shared mission to establish the Ethnic Community Council of NSW.

These founders recognised, as I do, that one of Australia's greatest strengths is our embrace of multiculturalism.

No one embodied this more than the late Jack Passaris, founding member of ECCNSW. Jack came to Australia in search of a new life, and dedicated himself to bringing people and communities together.

Thanks to the work of organisations like the ECCNSW, his story is one of millions of Australian success stories.

In every community across our nation, there are generations of Australians from around the globe who have worked hard, overcome challenges, and enriched our diverse society.

Whether your ancestors have loved and cared for this land for 60,000 years, or you've chosen to become part of the greatest country on Earth, all of us can take pride in the story we've written together.

Congratulations to everyone who has contributed to the Ethnic Community Council of NSW over a remarkable 50 years. Long may your efforts continue.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Albanese". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister of Australia**



In March this year I was delighted to formally accept a request to grant Vice-Regal Patronage to the Ethnic Communities' Council of New South Wales.

Therefore, it is as Governor, and as Patron of the Council, that I offer my warmest congratulations on your 50th anniversary and my very best wishes for this year's anniversary events including the 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner.

We live in a State where close to 30% of residents were born overseas, with more than 310 ancestries, and more than 283 languages spoken at home. I am proud to say we were the first state and the second jurisdiction in the world to enact multicultural principles in legislation.

Australia's reputation as the world's most successful multicultural society is in no small part due to the

impact of groups such as the Ethnic Communities' Council. The vibrant and vocal meeting in Sydney Town Hall on the 27th of July 1975, which led to the foundation of the Council, was a true landmark in our State's community life.

During this 50th anniversary we reflect on five decades of work which has resulted in the strengthening of New South Wales' culturally diverse communities through advocacy, leadership, education, empowerment, and friendship.

Congratulations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Beazley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Her Excellency the Honourable
Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales**



I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) on 50 years of service.

For half a century, you have been at the heart of this state's diverse communities, championing multiculturalism and strengthening social cohesion.

As Premier, I commend your dedicated work in promoting inclusion and supporting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as they settle into their new communities.

This is especially important in NSW, which is one of the most culturally diverse states in the world. Here, we're home to citizens who represent over 310 ancestries and speak more than 280 languages.

This anniversary is a chance to honour your legacy and reflect on your incredible impact.

Congratulations and best wishes for the future.

**The Hon Chris Minns
Premier of the State of New South
Wales in the Commonwealth of
Australia**



Thank you to all involved for the enormous contributions the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) has made to our state over the past five decades.

I commend everyone who has helped to make the council an effective advocate for our communities.

Its list of achievements over the past 50 years is long and substantial.

ECCNSW has been at the forefront of building some of the key infrastructure that sustains an equitable and multicultural Australia. A couple of examples include successfully advocating for the establishment of my agency Multicultural NSW, and helping to establish the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia.

In addition, the council has influenced government policy and legislation in key areas such as disability, domestic and family violence, climate change

and environment, homelessness, water and energy conservation, disability, and aged-care reforms.

As I said, it is a long list of accomplishments.

Our society has changed significantly since the council was first established, and despite many changes and challenges, ECCNSW has displayed impressive strength, resilience and agility.

I wish ECCNSW the best as it transitions to a company limited by guarantee, another evolution which will help it become even more effective as a community voice. May it enjoy another half century of improving lives.

**The Hon Steve Kamper MP
Minister for Multiculturalism**

CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Peter Doukas OAM, Chair

Dear members, friends and partners of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW,

It is with great honour and humility that I have served as Chair of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW since our last elections.

Over the past year, the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECC NSW) has remained at the forefront of promoting multiculturalism across New South Wales and Australia.

As a representative voice for our communities, we have actively contributed to the *National Multicultural Framework* and various State and Federal Government policy consultations. Our organisation has provided high-level advice on aged care, domestic, family and sexual violence, environmental sustainability, digital transformation, education, disability, and inclusion - ensuring that multicultural perspectives strengthen service delivery and policy outcomes.

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding commitment of the ECC NSW staff, led by our CEO, Ms Mary Karras whose leadership and dedication have been instrumental in implementing programs and projects that advance our mission. Their tireless efforts have strengthened our core work in advocacy, community development, and education.

This report marks my final message as Chair of this remarkable organisation. Having first been elected over 12 years ago, I remain deeply proud of what we have achieved together. I am especially grateful to our dedicated Board members and staff, whose commitment and professionalism have underpinned our success. I wish to extend special recognition to our Deputy Chair Fiona Passaris, Treasurer Emanuel Vaalgeorgiou and Secretary Glen Falkenstein for their invaluable contributions.

Multiculturalism in Australia has never been an accident - it is a vision that must be continually nurtured and safeguarded by peak advocates such as ECCNSW. In these times of international uncertainty and external pressures, our members and partner organisations across Australia remain steadfast in championing multiculturalism as an enduring stewardship of our nation's identity and unity.

The year 2025 marked the 50th anniversary of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. I was particularly honoured that this milestone was celebrated through the granting of Patronage by the Governor of NSW. Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC KC - an historic first for our organisation. Hosting Her Excellency at our 50th Anniversary Dinner in May was both a privilege and a highlight of my tenure.

It was also deeply gratifying that the Board, which has served together since 2019, was recognised as ECCNSW Ambassadors - acknowledging the modernisation and reforms achieved under our collective leadership.

Among our many accomplishments in 2025, transitioning to a *Company Limited by Guarantee* stands out as one of the most significant. This milestone represents a major step forward in governance and sustainability, reflecting our evolution into a dynamic, future-ready organisation that continues to lead as the peak body representing multiculturalism in New South Wales.

Since my first election as Chair in 2013, ECC NSW has transformed from an entity reliant on core government funding into a flexible, innovative organisation with multiple income streams and a broad network of stakeholders. This transformation has enabled us to expand our impact, strengthen our independence, and deliver more effectively for the communities we serve.

It has been an immense honour to serve as Chair of the ECC NSW. I thank all our members for their trust, support, and shared commitment to our mission.

As volunteers, our work is made possible only through the support of our families. I am deeply grateful to my wife Fiona and my children Grace, George and Zoe for their patience, understanding, and encouragement throughout my time as Chair.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside the leadership of ECC NSW and with our members to reinforce and advance the foundations of Australian multiculturalism for generations to come.

Yours in Multiculturalism,

Peter Doukas OAM
Chair



Awarded to Peter Doukas OAM in recognition of his exceptional contribution to Multiculturalism and Visionary Leadership

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

A Momentous Year of Achievement and Celebration



Mary Karras, CEO

The past year has been truly momentous for the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW marking the celebration of our 50-year milestone – a significant achievement that reflects five decades of commitment, growth, and community impact.

This landmark occasion was commemorated at our 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner in May, where we were honoured to welcome the NSW Governor, The Hon. Margaret Beazley AC KC as Patron of Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. The evening featured a moving Anniversary Tribute Video acknowledging the legacy of our predecessors, and the presentation of the 2025 Ambassador Awards, recognising individuals who have been instrumental in advancing our mission over the past decade.

As Chief Executive Officer, I am privileged to present the 2025 Annual Report. This Report highlights the collective accomplishments achieved through the dedication of our exceptional team of staff and volunteers, guided by the passion and commitment of our Chair and Board of Directors.

Our work this year has reflected strong strategic advocacy, sector leadership, and engagement across a range of critical areas, including disability inclusion, aged care, women's safety, electoral participation, domestic, family and sexual violence prevention, environmental sustainability and energy transition, human rights, and the elimination of racial discrimination.

As a statewide peak body, one of our core responsibilities is to represent and advocate on behalf of our members and communities. We do this through active collaboration and contributions to high-level discussions with national, state, and non-government consultative bodies, including:

- Department of Communities & Justice
- Multicultural NSW Peaks Partnership
- Australian Energy Regulator
- Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
- Office of Fair Trading
- Strata Commission
- Sydney Institute of Community Languages
- Sydney University
- NSW Ministerial Council on Family Domestic & Sexual Violence
- Lifespan Health & Wellbeing Research Centre
- Macquarie University
- Australasian College of Dermatologists
- NSW Department of Education
- Sydney Water
- NSW Police Area Commands
- Australian Electoral Commission
- National Office of Child Safety
- NSW Electoral Commission
- Jemena Gas
- Transgrid
- Essential Energy
- Ausgrid
- Endeavour Energy
- City of Sydney, Multicultural Panel

Our day-to-day operations focus on project delivery and community engagement initiatives that demonstrate our deep, grass-roots connections with multilingual, multifaith, and multicultural communities and small businesses across New South Wales.

These connections strengthen our understanding of community and sector needs, reaffirming the vital importance of a multicultural voice in shaping policy, driving inclusion, and informing sector development.

As you read through this Report, you will see the breadth of our engagement, the value of our “in-language” support delivered through our skilled bilingual and bicultural educators and facilitators, and the tangible impact of our work across the state and beyond.

However, we recognise that growth and resilience must not remain static in today’s rapidly changing world. As a leading organisation, the Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW must continue to evolve – remaining agile, forward-thinking, and responsive to the challenges that affect the social fabric of our communities.

In 2026, we will embark on the development of a new Strategic Plan, under the leadership of a renewed Board of Directors, who will guide our direction, strengthen our impact, and chart the course for the next three years.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to our volunteer Board of Directors, who have consistently fulfilled their responsibilities with dedication, integrity, and grace.

It has been a distinct honour and privilege to serve alongside our esteemed Chair, Peter Doukas OAM whose unwavering commitment to the principles of multiculturalism has been a driving force behind the organisation’s success. Personally, and professionally, I have deeply valued the mutual respect and synergy we have shared in our leadership partnership.

As we enter 2026 – the beginning of a new decade for the Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW – I am energised and optimistic about the opportunities ahead. I look forward to working collaboratively with the Board, our members, and the broader community as we continue to build an inclusive, dynamic, and resilient future.

Mary Karras
Chief Executive Officer &
Company Secretary



Award received for 10 years of Service

ABOUT US

Our Purpose

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW is the only state wide peak body representing multicultural communities across New South Wales.

Our Vision

An inclusive Australian society that actively upholds the principles of multiculturalism.

Our Results

Our key areas are:

- **Engage and Empower**

Engage, involve, and empower CALD communities to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life.

- **Collaborate and Partner**

Collaborate and form partnerships to generate collective action on issues of importance to CALD communities.

- **Lead and Represent**

Take a leadership role as an advocate for multiculturalism and represent issues of importance to CALD communities to governments and businesses.

- **Strengthen and Build Capacity**

Strengthen our processes and build organisational capacity to achieve strategic objectives.

NUMBER OF
Capacity Building
SESSIONS

1174

NUMBER OF
Locations
WHERE **Sessions**
WERE DELIVERED

284

NUMBER OF
Languages
DELIVERED
IN

23

NUMBER OF
Service PROVIDERS
AND **Community**
Groups WE
COLLABORATED WITH

400

HIGH LEVEL
Advisory
REPRESENTATIONS

- 20** Government Advisory
- 13** Industry Advisory
- 4** Not for Profits

NUMBER OF
Participants
WE
ENGAGED

17,577

NUMBER OF
Focus Group
Participants
WE ENGAGED

1962

NUMBER OF
Programs
AND **Projects**
FUNDED IN 2025

11

NUMBER OF
Participants
IN **Online**
SESSIONS

10,174

NUMBER OF
Participants
WE ENGAGED
IN VARIOUS
In Language
INFORMATION SESSIONS

5441

NUMBER OF
Submissions

6

- 2** Parliamentary Inquiries (Anti-Semitism & Criminal Hate Speech)
- 4** Government Responses (Energy Protections, Climate Change & Fair Work)

NUMBER OF **Years**
SINCE FOUNDED



\$150,000 funding we received for 2024-25 from the NSW Government through Multicultural NSW

Member NUMBERS:
AFFILIATE COMMUNITY
ORGANISATIONS AND
INDIVIDUAL ASSOCIATES

378

- 87%** Ethnic Community Organisations
- 19%** Other Non-profit Organisations
- 9%** Multicultural Service Providers

Staff

- 12** staff engaged in advocacy, policy & sector development
- 1** specialising in energy reduction & climate change
- 6** generalists working on statewide issues
- 2** specialising in community care
- 3** specializing in capacity building in ageing & disability
- 4** engaged in media & communications
- 33** Bilingual Educators

Community
REPRESENTATIVES

76

- 41%** ethnicities
- 85%** born overseas
- 12%** refugees
- 10** belief systems
- 32** language groups that speak all the most commonly spoken languages in NSW

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Community Development
- Education
- Advocacy



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) proudly celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a Gala Dinner on Tuesday, 10 June at Le Montage, Lilyfield. The dinner brought together over 370 distinguished guests, community leaders, and government representatives for a night of reflection, recognition, and unity.

The guest of honour was Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales and Patron of the ECCNSW.

This was her first official engagement since she granted patronage to the ECCNSW. Her Excellency presented Ambassador Awards to Board Directors, Fiona Passaris, Emanuel Valageorgiou, Glen Falkenstein, Joshua Moses, Abbas Alvi, George Bouteris, Indarjit Khuman, Suellyn Lin, Christine Lynch OAM, Siddique Panwala, Sam Pashalis, Amir Salem OAM, and CEO, Mary Karras, in recognition of their outstanding service over the past 10 years. Throughout this time, they have championed ECCNSW, provided steadfast leadership, particularly during the challenges of the pandemic and helped shape the organisation into a leading peak body across the state.

A special presentation was made to Peter Doukas OAM, Chair of the ECCNSW recognising his service.

The Hon. Steve Kamper MP, Minister for Multiculturalism on behalf of Hon. Chris Minns MP, Premier of NSW presented awards to staff marking significant anniversaries of service including:

- Mary Karras - 10 years
- Mariette Mikhael - 24 years
- Christine Ahn - 10 years
- Karen Li - 10 years
- Esther Lozano - 10 years
- Iain Maitland - 10 years

The Minister also presented special acknowledgements to Ms. Anna Dimo, Sth Sudanese Community Elder and to Multicultural NSW, CEO, Mr Joseph La Posta for their exceptional support and collaboration.

Speeches from The Hon. Steve Kamper MP, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Mr Mark Coure MP, Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, reaffirmed bipartisan support for multiculturalism in NSW.

A special tribute was paid to ECCNSW board members who have passed in the decade, honouring their legacy including Edna McGill OAM, Tasha Vanos OAM, Tony Pun OAM, Ian Lacey AM, Jon Soemarjono, Jack Passaris OAM, and George Varughese.

Richelle Harrison Plesse of SBS did a stellar job as Master of Ceremonies and guests enjoyed performances by the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools Choir, the Aristotelian Academy of Greek Dance, and the Spirit of Islands Dance Company.

The dinner was generously supported by:

- **Platinum Sponsor**, SSI
- **Gold Sponsor**, AHEPA Australia
- **Silver Sponsor**, Multicultural NSW
- **Corporate Fraternity Table**, Cultural Perspectives
- **Media Partner**, SBS







KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

BIN TRIM NETWORKS PROGRAM

CALD Social Enterprises move towards a Circular Economy

SNAPSHOT

- **89** small to medium-sized businesses assisted with waste assessments, action plan development, and implementation to reduce waste and increase recycling.
- **116** workshops and training sessions on waste management, worm farming, and composting were delivered to participating businesses.
- Over **300** resources, including worm farms, composting facilities, internal sorting bins, reusable items, signage, paper shredders, and garden beds, were provided to participating businesses.
- **50%** reduction in organic waste sent to landfills has been achieved through tailored education and resource support.
- **27** locations across Sydney were engaged, reaching multiple LGAs and involving a wide range of businesses both within and beyond these areas.

In 2024–2025, the ECCNSW Bin Trim Networks Program (BTNP) CALD *Social Enterprises move towards a Circular Economy* funded through NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) advanced strongly towards its objectives of improving waste practices and building sustainability knowledge among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) businesses.

Building on its initial success in identifying and recruiting small to medium-sized businesses, the Program strategically engaged early learning centres and ethnic-religious incorporated associations that serve food onsite and are managed by people from multicultural backgrounds.

As of this period, 89 businesses have registered in the program, representing over 80% of the 105 business target. The BTNP team has conducted 85 first waste assessments and supported the implementation of 75 tailored action plans.

A defining strength of the program has been its culturally relevant and language-appropriate delivery. ECCNSW staff, drawing on their own cultural and linguistic expertise, successfully engaged businesses in trusted environments. This approach

has been especially effective for ethnic religious organisations, ensuring participants understood the Program's aims and were empowered to adopt sustainable waste practices.

The Program has now progressed into its second phase of implementation and monitoring, with 42 second waste assessments and action plans completed. These have provided valuable insights into progress, challenges, and the effectiveness of implemented changes.

In addition, more than 100 face-to-face education sessions were delivered, by the ECCNSW bilingual educators, covering practical topics such as waste separation, composting, worm farming, and reducing single-use plastics. Delivered interactively and in appropriate languages where required, these sessions provided not only technical knowledge but also practical skills and confidence for businesses to embed sustainable practices in their daily operations.

Many participants have already reported tangible improvements, such as increased staff participation in waste sorting, reduced contamination in recycling bins, and the adoption of composting techniques. These outcomes highlight the program's significant impact in reducing waste and strengthening the capacity of CALD businesses to lead on sustainability. Moving forward, the Program will continue into 2026, supporting participating businesses to embed practices that reduce waste, increase recycling, and contribute to a circular economy, ensuring long-term environmental benefits for both their operations and the wider community.



A Childcare Centre in Fairfield

Children and staff joined a Bin Trim in-house excursion, learning about waste sorting, composting, and caring for the environment, with hands-on activities sparking curiosity about food scraps and sustainable practices

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

COLONOSCOPY – WHY NOT? PROJECT

ECCNSW had a long-standing and impactful partnership with the NSW Cancer Institute, delivering health promotion campaigns to diverse CALD communities. Previous initiatives included the Quit Smoking Program (2017), which targeted Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean-speaking communities, successfully engaging hard-to-reach groups and producing animated resources in five languages, and Prevention, Take the Offer, a campaign designed to raise awareness and increase participation in cancer screening programs among CALD populations.

ECCNSW's CEO, Ms. Mary Karras, also plays a pivotal role in co-designing the NSW Cancer Institute's Strategic Plan, ensuring that CALD perspectives were embedded across statewide health strategies. Building on this strong foundation, ECCNSW delivered the *Colonoscopy, Why Not?* Program this year to address low uptake of colonoscopy procedures among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities

The *Colonoscopy, Why Not?* Program addressed the barriers that prevented culturally and linguistically diverse communities from accessing colonoscopy services.

In 2024, ECCNSW engaged communities through in-language focus groups with participants from Arabic-speaking, Assyrian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Korean, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Laotian, and Filipino backgrounds. These consultations identified key challenges, including fear and anxiety, language barriers, and complex bowel preparation instructions.

The findings highlighted the need for:

- Culturally tailored health education
- Simplified bowel preparation guidance
- Access to bilingual health support
- Stronger community engagement

In the final stage of this program, ECCNSW will capitalise on the NSW Cancer Institute's Bowel Cancer Awareness campaign by engaging targeted CALD communities (Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Thai, Nepali) through the facilitation of tailored information sessions. These sessions will sustain interest, amplify awareness, and strengthen participation in bowel cancer screening programs, including essential follow-up to colonoscopy procedures.

SNAPSHOT

- Number of information sessions: **11** Focus Groups
- Number of participants engaged: **74**
- Number of languages: **11** (Lebanese, Assyrian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Korean, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Laotian, and Tagalog)

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

DIGITAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

Keeping our communities informed and connected

Throughout the year, the Communications Division of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) has continued to play a vital role in keeping our members, partners, and the wider community informed and connected. By sharing timely updates, community stories, and useful resources, we have helped raise awareness about important issues and celebrated the achievements of our diverse communities.

Our communications platforms – including social media, newsletters, and our website – have become key spaces for engagement. Posts and stories published during the year reached wide audiences, sparking conversations and highlighting the strength and diversity of multicultural NSW.

Enhancing digital access

In November 2024, ECCNSW launched its **new website**, designed to make information easier to find and improve the user experience for members and stakeholders. It was selected overseas as a winner in the 14th Annual Web Excellence Awards, for its inclusivity and accessibility. The modern, accessible layout provides direct access to key resources, project updates, and community initiatives. The launch received a strong response across all digital channels, highlighting the growing importance of online engagement.

Celebrating 50 years of advocacy

One of the year's most memorable moments was ECCNSW's **50th Anniversary Gala Dinner**, held on 22 May 2025. The event marked five decades of advocacy, community empowerment, and dedication to building a more inclusive Australia.



Guests reflected on ECCNSW's proud history and celebrated the many voices that have shaped its journey. A special tribute video has been created to mark the 50 years, and can be viewed on the ECCNSW website.

The celebration drew significant attention across our social media channels and website, with community members sharing their memories and messages of support.

Sharing new voices through media

Another highlight was the announcement of a **new collaboration with Deaf Australia** to produce an innovative *Speak My Language (Disability)* video podcast series. The five-part series explore the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse Auslan users within the Deaf community.

This announcement generated strong interest online, reflecting the community's enthusiasm for projects that give voice to diverse experiences and promote inclusion.



Highlights from our newsletters

ECCNSW's newsletters continued to provide reliable updates on major events and policy developments, reaching thousands of readers across the state.

One of the most impactful topics featured was the **2024 FECCA National Conference** in Brisbane, which attracted over 700 participants to discuss multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusion. Our *Speak My Language* National Manager, Vanessa Papastavros, presented an engaging session titled "*Solution-Based Stories: Shifting CALD Community Attitudes Towards Disability.*" Her contribution received great feedback and wide interest from our readers.

We also proudly announced the election of Mr Peter Doukas OAM, ECCNSW Chair, as the newly elected Chair of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), and Mr Emanuel Valageorgiou, ECCNSW Treasurer, as the newly elected Treasurer of FECCA. These achievements were among our most-read newsletter stories, underscoring the national recognition of ECCNSW's leadership.

Supporting safe and inclusive communities

We also welcomed the NSW Government's announcement of an additional \$5 million investment in the *Safe Places for Faith Communities Grants Program*. This funding follows a successful first round that supported more than 100 faith and community organisations to enhance safety and security at places of worship. The update received positive attention from our networks, reflecting strong community interest in programs that promote safety and inclusion. ECCNSW received a part of this funding through



Multicultural NSW, to work with two Thai Buddhist temples and one Hindu temple that serving Thai and Tamil speaking communities. Through our collaborations, we addressed critical safety concerns by combining infrastructure improvements, training, and community engagement.

Looking ahead

The continued growth of ECCNSW's communication platforms shows the importance of keeping our members and communities informed about current issues, opportunities, and success stories. Whether through social media, newsletters, or our website, each story shared strengthens our collective voice and connection.

As we look to the future, ECCNSW remains committed to clear, inclusive, and engaging communication that supports our mission – to represent, empower, and unite the culturally and linguistically diverse communities of New South Wales.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY PROJECT

‘Road Safety Awareness for CALD Seniors’

SNAPSHOT

- **9** community languages facilitated the delivery of information sessions by bilingual educators.
- **9** culturally tailored resources developed (translated brochures, presentations, and visual aids).
- **12** road safety information sessions delivered across Sydney metropolitan areas.
- **320+** CALD seniors directly participated in the program.
- More than **1,000** additional community members were indirectly reached through peer-to-peer sharing.
- Over **90%** of participants reported improved understanding of pedestrian and road safety rules, along with increased confidence in safely navigating public transport and crossings.

The Road Safety Awareness for CALD Seniors project funded through Transport NSW, continues to make strong progress, equipping older community members from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds with the knowledge and confidence to adopt safer road practices. Designed to address the specific needs of seniors aged 55 and over, the project has focused on making road safety information accessible, practical, and culturally relevant.

To date, over 320 seniors have directly participated in in-language road safety sessions delivered across Sydney. These sessions have been facilitated by experienced bilingual educators, whose role has been critical in ensuring that content is clear, relatable, and delivered in a trusted environment. Participants have consistently reported that receiving road safety information in their first language makes it easier to understand and apply in everyday life.

The sessions, covering pedestrian and driver safety, have been interactive and engaging, encouraging

participants to share personal experiences and learn from one another. Hundreds of translated resources have also been distributed, both during workshops and at wider community gatherings, reinforcing key messages and extending the project’s reach to family, friends, and the broader community. Feedback has highlighted that seniors are not only learning new information but also adopting tangible changes in behaviour, such as increased use of pedestrian crossings, heightened attentiveness near traffic, and more cautious driving in high-pedestrian areas.

The project has also achieved significant milestones, including the successful roll-out of sessions across nine language communities and the refinement of translated materials to align with NSW road safety priorities. The strong engagement of bilingual facilitators and community group leaders has ensured the program remains practical, inclusive, and widely accessible.

While the project is ongoing, its impact is already visible, with seniors demonstrating improved knowledge, stronger confidence, and safer behaviours on the road. The ripple effect of participants sharing information with peers and family members further amplifies the outcomes, ensuring road safety messages extend well beyond direct attendees.

ECCNSW will continue to deliver and expand these activities, reinforcing safer practices among CALD seniors and contributing to a safer, more connected community.



Road Safety Information session delivered in the Arabic language, Liverpool

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (ICAC) INITIATIVE

Over the past year, ECCNSW has been working extensively with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) on a community awareness initiative to inform Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities about corrupt conduct, the role of ICAC, and how to report concerns. The project aimed to increase awareness of the harms of corruption, highlight ICAC's investigative and preventative role, and build confidence among vulnerable community members to report corruption. The targeted languages of this initiative were Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean and Tagalog.

The ECCNSW has played an integral role in guiding the development of culturally appropriate content for focus group and information sessions and consultations. By allocating Bilingual Educators we were able to deliver relevant and culturally appropriate content pitched at a community level language, and not "government speak". Findings were formally documented and forwarded to ICAC to inform future directions of the project both after the focus

group and information session and consultations.

The first phase of the project included the delivery of focus groups by the ECCNSW Bilingual Educators from the 6 different language groups to consult and gather background information from their respective CALD communities. Participants were asked what their understandings were of corruption, their awareness of the ICAC and its role in investigating and preventing corruption. Information was also gathered on participant awareness of how to report corrupt conduct and what the perceived barriers were to reporting or confronting corrupt conduct. Importantly, the Commission also wanted to learn how best to communicate to members of the CALD community during these meetings.

The findings from the six focus groups showed that there was general support for community level language translated material on how to report corruption but also a strong message was relayed by participants that community engagement and

SNAPSHOT

- Number of focus groups: **6**
- Number of participants engaged: **60**
- Number of languages: **6**
- Number of locations: **6**
- Number of information sessions: **6**
- Number of participants: **111**
- Number of languages: **6**
- Number of locations: **6**



Information sessions delivered in Mandarin at the ECCNSW Auditorium, Waterloo

education to raise awareness and trust in ICAC was vital.

The findings also showed that participants were in agreement that corruption is wrong, creates unfair outcomes, and weakens trust in public institutions. However, as part of this consultation, it was revealed that participants were unaware of ICAC, or how to report corruption. Some said they were worried about possible retaliation if they reported, and others felt that limited English skills made it harder to get information or take action. Participants from CALD communities overwhelmingly supported having information in their own language about how to report corruption.

As a result of participant comments captured by the ECCNSW Bilingual Educators in their Report to ICAC, a draft pamphlet was developed, *'Make a difference to our community - tell us about corruption'*. Its aim is to inform members of CALD communities about what corrupt conduct is and how to report it. More importantly, it also aims to alleviate people's anxieties about reporting.

Following the development of the draft pamphlet, the Bilingual Educators returned to their communities for consultation and feedback of the six in language drafts, including participants from the initial focus group sessions. An ICAC official attended each to answer any technical questions about the work of the Commission. These sessions were held mostly in person over July and August. Overall, the draft pamphlet, as a first stage communication and engagement product for vulnerable CALD communities unfamiliar with ICAC, and who harbour a tradition lack of trust in government institutions, has been well received.

Feedback about the draft pamphlet was provided by participants and focused on language nuances,



Top: ICAC Information Session

Above: Focus Groups facilitated in Arabic

cultural sensitivities, text readability, clarity of concepts, title and slogan improvement, visual representation, accessibility, choice of examples, language support enhancements and improved reporting format.

Our work in collaboration with the ICAC, will continue, by providing feedback to the ICAC communications team on changes to the pamphlet in light of CALD community needs, playing a particular role as a point of reference for cultural appropriateness.

ECCNSW will allocate its Bilingual Educators to ground proof the pamphlet during the final stage of development. Once completed, the pamphlets will provide CALD communities with improved access to the Commission's information and services in their own languages, supporting ICAC in strengthening engagement and building more trusted relationships with targeted communities.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

INNER WEST SECTOR SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT (IWSSD)

During the last 12 months, the ECCNSW Inner West Sector Support Development Officer (IWSSDO) delivered tailored initiatives to strengthen the knowledge and operational capacity of aged care service providers.

Forums, targeted training programs and structured Roundtable discussions were implemented to address identified needs across the sector. These activities supported frontline staff, senior management, and Boards to build confidence in navigating the aged care reform requirements, governance responsibilities, and sector priorities.

Reform Readiness

In preparation for the aged care reforms and transition to the new Support at Home Program, the ECCNSW IWSSDO led a series of interactive events, workshops, and briefings for the sector.

Priority areas addressed included:

- compliance, governance
- workforce attraction
- retention strategies
- Board reform roadmaps.

These initiatives provided CHSP funded organisations with timely, evidence-informed guidance to ensure organisational readiness and strategic alignment with the new Aged Care Act and policy environment.

Capacity Building

In addition, the ECCNSW IWSSDO implemented targeted initiatives to strengthen the capability of CHSP funded organisations through workforce development projects and governance-focused training. These initiatives equipped CHSP service providers with practical tools, contemporary knowledge, and structured frameworks to enhance service delivery, workforce planning, and leadership capacity.

The outcomes of this work supported the CHSP providers to embed continuous improvement processes and to build resilience in the context of an evolving and reform-driven aged care environment.

SNAPSHOT

- Number of Capacity Building Sessions with Inner west CHSP/Aged Care funded organisations: **15**
- Number of attendees: **450**
- Number of CHSP service providers supported: **147**
- Number of training sessions facilitated: **30**
- Number of attendees: **7015**
- Number of collaborations including online sessions: **330**
- Number of Councils collaborated with: **8**
- Number of Sector Support Development resources developed: **26**



Interactive Forum with Sydney Inner West Region CHSP service providers

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR NON-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION

Wednesday 12 February 2025 11AM - 1PM

Description:
 Not-for-profit organisations need to think creatively and act strategically to stay ahead while effectively serving their communities.
 The workshop covers:
 - Evaluating current business activities for viability and future potential.
 - Canvassing community and other stakeholders for business ideas.
 - Innovative ways to diversify your income streams and the benefits of doing so.
 - Seeking government and expert advice where appropriate.
 - Identifying and analyzing potential markets' using feasibility studies.
 - Creating, implementing and evaluating business plans that take account of local, cultural and community requirements.

Consultant:
 Jon Staley

Register now!

For further information, please contact:
 Marina Antonas - Inner West Sydney SSDO
 marina.antonas@eccnsw.org.au
 Kim McLean - Central West SSDO
 kimc@orange.nsw.gov.au
 Cheryl Burros - Orana Far West SSDO
 cheryl.burros@livebetter.org.au

SSDO COLLABORATION

Inner West Sydney, Central West and Orana Far West Sector Support Development Training Calendar

Sector Engagement

The ECCNSW IWSSDO facilitated mechanisms for two-way engagement between CHSP funded organisations and government. Interactive forums and consultation sessions provided opportunities for providers to contribute feedback on sector challenges and implementation implications. This ensured local perspectives were captured and communicated effectively at a policy level.

Collectively, these activities contributed to improved organisational capability across the Inner West region, strengthened provider alignment with government priorities, and supported the broader policy intent of building a sustainable, accountable, and reform-ready aged care sector.

- **The Inner West Region Dementia Friendly Alliance**

Significant progress was achieved in strengthening dementia care pathways and improving access to aged care services, in partnership with the Inner West Region's Dementia Friendly Community Alliance.

Collaborative efforts with Alliance members focused on the development of tailored resources, engagement with key contacts and peak bodies to raise community awareness, and the establishment of partnerships with dementia experts and universities. These collaborations provided access to a wide range of specialist expertise, supporting the achievement of the Alliance's key objectives in dementia care.

The ECCNSW IWSSDO in partnership with the Alliance and Sydney Local Health District, also prioritised engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Together, a series of initiatives were implemented, including five dementia presentations on brain wellness, which were delivered to local aged care providers and multicultural community groups. These activities contributed to greater awareness, improved access to information, and enhanced capacity for providers and communities to respond to dementia-related needs.

- **Partnership with statewide NSW Sector Support Development (SSD) Officers and TAFE NSW**

In partnership with the statewide NSW Sector Support and Development Officers and TAFE NSW, the ECCNSW IWSSDO facilitated access to accredited courses for aged care service providers, with a particular focus on frontline staff. These initiatives were designed to strengthen workforce skills, ensure staff remain up to date with contemporary practice, and support compliance with evolving aged care requirements.

Several service providers took advantage of this opportunity, with field staff including those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, successfully undertaking accredited TAFE courses. This partnership not only contributed to individual workforce development but also enhanced organisational capability in responding to reform priorities and delivering high-quality aged care services.

Worried about DEMENTIA?
 Where to get help in the Inner West Region

This brochure was designed collectively by the Inner West Region Dementia Friendly Alliance members: Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Inner West), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Central West), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Orana Far West), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Sydney), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Wentworth), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Western Sydney), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (South Coast), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (North Coast), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Central Coast), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Newcastle), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Maitland), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Cessnock), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Port Macquarie), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Tweed), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Ballina), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Lismore), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Grafton), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Bygonia), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Tenterden), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Murrumbidgee), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Snowy Mountains), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Albury), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Wagga Wagga), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Mildura), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Shepparton), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Geelong), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Melbourne), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Perth), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Adelaide), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Brisbane), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Sydney), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Newcastle), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Wollongong), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Queensland), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Victoria), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (South Australia), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Western Australia), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Tasmania), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Northern Territory), Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (Australian Capital Territory).

INNER WEST Dementia Friendly Alliance

Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW
 Representing All Communities

Ethnic Community Services Co-operative
 A focus on ageing activities

Inner West Region Dementia Friendly Alliance

Dementia Pathways brochure – Inner West Region's Dementia Friendly Community Alliance



Aged Care Information Sessions – ECCNSW IWSSDO, Marina Antonas and ECCNSW Bilingual Educator, Ye Lu

- **Community Aged Care Information Sessions**

During Seniors Week, the ECCNSW SSDO, in collaboration with ECCNSW’s **Bilingual Educators**, facilitated a series of aged care information sessions focusing on the changes in the Australian aged care system. These sessions provided older people, families, and carers with clear and accessible information on aged care services, current reforms, and available supports.

The sessions also assisted carers and care recipients to better understand their rights, responsibilities, and the range of choices available to them. In addition, participants were equipped with up-to-date information on current reforms and system changes, enabling families to prepare for and navigate the evolving aged care landscape with greater confidence.



Attendance at National and high-level meetings

The ECCNSW IWSSDO contributed significantly to sector leadership and collaboration over this past year, with a strong focus on supporting the transition to the aged care reform agenda.

This included representation at NSW/ACT Aged Care Liaison Group, a high level government committee, where the ECCNSW IWSSDO, alongside the ECCNSW CEO, provided expertise on the CHSP aged care services and multicultural issues, ensuring that diverse perspectives were considered in policy discussions and reform design.

At the national level, the ECCNSW IWSSDO actively engaged through the National Sector Support Development Network and National Sector Support and Development Working Groups, offering state-based insights to inform national priorities and sector-wide reform initiatives.

The ECCNSW IWSSDO is contributing to advancing **the aged care reform**

agenda, with a particular focus on the **transition to the Support at Home program**, by serving as a moderator of the **National SSD Communities of Practice intranet**, a platform dedicated to sector-wide collaboration and reform implementation.

As a moderator for the Department of Health, Disability & Ageing the ECCNSW IWSSDO organised and structured reform-related content, uploaded critical resources specific to Support at Home, and facilitated active engagement across dedicated working groups.

These activities strengthened National SSD collaboration and promoted the dissemination of best practice approaches and aligned messaging regarding the Support at Home transition nationally.

Inner West Aged Care Services Website

The Inner West Aged Care Services Website continued to serve as a centralised sector resource throughout the year, and provided up to date information and tailored resources to 74 CHSP funded organisations across the Inner West Sydney region, in addition to other CHSP providers across the state and nationally who accessed the website.



Inner West Region ECCNSW IWSSDO Aged Care Services Website

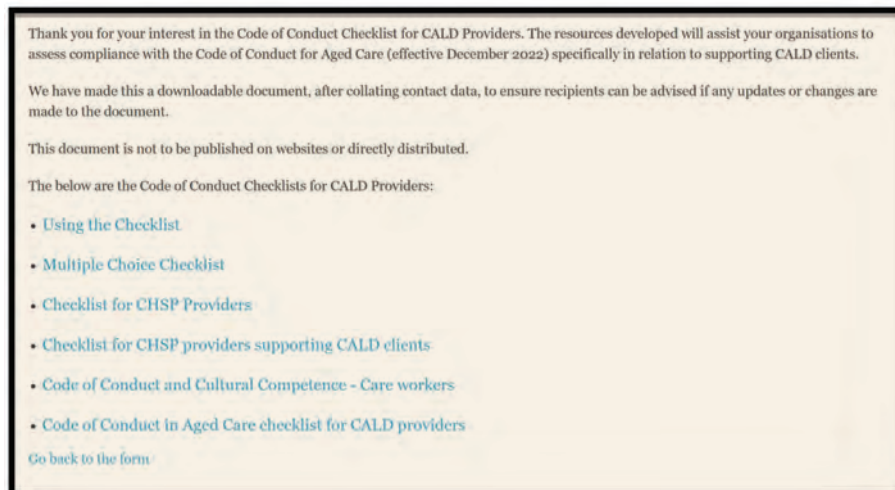
The platform operated as a consolidated information hub, providing streamlined access to authoritative aged care publications, local and National initiatives, and practical tools designed to strengthen service delivery and reform preparedness.

The website-maintained currency through a continuous refresh of new projects and resources at the local, state, and national levels. Key additions included culturally and linguistically diverse resources, aged care workforce onboarding videos, and a range of training and development opportunities. These initiatives were strategically aligned to strengthen provider capability and support reform readiness, with a particular focus on preparing the sector for the transition to the Support at Home Program.

Collectively, these enhancements reinforced the website's role as not only a local resource, but also as a State and National sector-wide enabler.

NSW Multicultural Sector Support Development Project

The NSW Multicultural Sector Support Development Project continued to provide critical support and capacity-building for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) aged care funded organisations. In collaboration with the National SSD Embedding Diversity and Inclusion and Compliance Working Groups, the Project, through its Project Officer, delivered measurable outcomes that strengthened provider capability, compliance, and CALD workforce preparedness. Some of the resources developed through this Project included:



Code of Conduct Checklist for CALD providers

- **Clinical Governance Resources**

Developed accountability and continuous improvement checklists tailored for ethno-specific and multicultural providers.

- **Code of Conduct Implementation**

Produced a checklist and guide specifically for CALD services.

- **Workforce Development**

Delivered resources and guidance to address sector workforce needs.

- **Sector Engagement**

Facilitated roundtable discussions with CALD-funded providers to identify workforce challenges and emerging priorities.

- **Capacity-Building Activities**

Organised workshops and training sessions in collaboration with sector officers.

Furthermore, through targeted professional development training and webinars, CALD CHSP-funded organisations embedded culturally sensitive approaches and strategies that met CALD community needs. These initiatives were shared with SSDs statewide and nationally via the Communities of Practice set up by the Department of Health, Disability and Aging.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

SAFE PLACES FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES

‘Worship in a Safe Place’

The *Worship in a Safe Place* Project funded through Multicultural NSW, strengthened the safety, security, and resilience of three places of worship – two Thai Buddhist temples and one Hindu temple – serving Thai and Tamil speaking communities. Funded through Multicultural NSW, the initiative addressed critical safety concerns by combining infrastructure improvements, training, and community engagement.

ECCNSW staff conducted site visits and consultations with temple leaders, staff, and community representatives to identify risks and co-design tailored security enhancement plans. These plans were implemented with the installation of CCTV systems, alarms, reinforced entry points, lighting, and signage, ensuring that each temple was better equipped to manage safety concerns. Alongside these physical upgrades, ECCNSW delivered security awareness and emergency preparedness training sessions, reaching more than 500 staff, volunteers, and community members. Conducted in Tamil and Thai by the ECCNSW bilingual educators, these sessions focused on emergency response, conflict de-escalation, and collective responsibility, building confidence and preparedness within the communities.

The Project achieved lasting impact by reducing vulnerabilities, creating safer environments for worshippers, and equipping communities with the skills and confidence to maintain these safety measures into the future. Strong community involvement, particularly through the active participation of temple leaders and members, fostered a sense of ownership and accountability that will help sustain the improvements achieved. Regular feedback, site visits, and participant evaluations guided the process, ensuring that activities remained aligned with community



A monk at the Wat Buddharangsee (Thai temple, Annandale) after the CCTVs and monitors were installed

needs and responsive to emerging challenges.

By combining infrastructure upgrades with culturally tailored training and engagement, the Project not only enhanced security but also strengthened cohesion and resilience, leaving the participating temples better prepared and their communities more confident in safeguarding their places of worship.



Wat Buddharangsee (Thai temple, Annandale)

SNAPSHOT

- **3** places of worship supported through tailored project activities, including the provision of security-related equipment to strengthen their overall security systems.
- **2** community language groups have been supported (Thai and Tamil).
- **2** culturally tailored safety resources developed and distributed (translated guides, posters, checklists).
- **150+** faith community members, including faith leaders, temple staff and volunteers, and worshippers, participated in emergency preparedness and security awareness sessions.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

SETS (SETTLEMENT ENGAGEMENT & TRANSITION SUPPORT) PROGRAM

Settle in, Skill Up! – Department of Home Affairs

SNAPSHOT

- **142** participants actively engaged, benefiting from tailored support and practical skill-building activities.
- **36** information and education sessions delivered across key topics, including employment readiness, financial literacy, digital literacy, and sustainable living.
- **7** language groups supported, with sessions delivered in community languages by ECCNSW bilingual educators.
- **20** service providers and community organisations engaged to strengthen referral pathways and collaborative support for participants.
- **7** Community of Practice (CoP) sessions were attended by ECCNSW representatives to stay informed on the latest project updates from the department and to network with other service providers and community organisations, share good practice, and learn from collective experiences.

ECCNSW continued to advance its settlement support program, focusing on enabling newly arrived women and isolated older migrants from CALD backgrounds to strengthen their social participation, economic inclusion, and personal wellbeing. The “*Settle In, Skill Up*” Program is delivered through a holistic onboarding approach, where bilingual educators conduct needs-based assessments, identify participant priorities, and provide tailored pathways of support.

During the year, ECCNSW completed 100% of initial needs analyses for new participants, ensuring individual circumstances were addressed from the outset. To date, Tamil and Nepali-speaking women have participated in 28 sessions, while preparations for Urdu and African-speaking women’s groups are underway. Delivered in-language by bilingual facilitators, sessions have covered career pathways, recognition of overseas qualifications, job readiness, digital literacy, financial wellbeing, health navigation, taxation, and sustainable living. Guest speakers from agencies such as TAFE NSW, Service NSW, and taxation advisory services expanded participant knowledge and referral options. Across groups, 85–90% of participants reported high satisfaction with program content, relevance, and

delivery. Over 90% also accessed cold referrals to pursue further education, training, or employment support.

For isolated older migrants, ECCNSW Bilingual Educators delivered the digital literacy sessions to 102 participants across multiple LGAs, reaching participants from Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Korean, Tamil, Hindi, and other language backgrounds. Each group received one to three sessions tailored to their needs, with topics including computer and smartphone use, cyber safety, social media, and access to online government services. Participants demonstrated measurable improvements in digital inclusion, reporting greater confidence in staying connected with family, engaging in community activities and navigating essential services.

ECCNSW also provided low-intensity support for participants who engaged on a one-off or irregular basis. This included advice and cold referrals on employment readiness, financial literacy, tenancy rights, and navigating mainstream services. More than 40 participants to date have been referred to agencies such as Service NSW, Sydney Local Health District, and employment pathway providers.



Tamil-speaking women participating in a TAFE NSW Education and Employment Pathways course

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

ENERGY ADVOCACY

Community consultation remained central to delivery. ECCNSW facilitated sessions with stakeholders, faith-based groups, and informal associations, ensuring the program reflects the needs and aspirations of participants. These consultations have also expanded referral pathways and strengthened collaboration across the sector.

ECCNSW continues to actively contribute to the national SET's Community of Practice, and the national SET's CEO Network, in addition to participating in forums, thematic subgroups, and settlement networks. This involvement has strengthened partnerships, supported knowledge exchange, and ensured alignment with best practice and government priorities.

The *"Settle In, Skill Up"* Program is progressing strongly, delivering measurable outcomes in social connection, digital literacy, employability, financial autonomy, and long-term settlement integration. It will continue into 2026, providing meaningful support to newly arrived women and isolated older migrants, ensuring the target communities are equipped with the skills, confidence, and pathways needed to achieve the SET's Program's broader purpose of sustainable settlement and inclusion. We acknowledge that funding received is through the Department of Home Affairs.

The CEO is the ECCNSW's Energy Advocate, and a member of a range of energy customer consultative council and groups including the three NSW Electricity Distribution businesses Ausgrid, Endeavour and Essential Energy, the NSW Electricity transmission business Transgrid, and Jemena Gas.

With the growing challenges faced by consumers including affordable issues stemming from continued high energy prices, the development of renewable energy infrastructure, and increased take up of Consumer Energy resources, the ECCNSW Energy Advocate provides CALD specific advice and guidance for a fair and inclusive energy transition to net zero.

As part of our representation, we contribute to various joint submissions with organizations that represent Energy consumer interests. This year we have contributed to several joint submissions with the Justice Equity Centre to ensure consumer protections are in place and improve equity and limit disadvantage across CALD communities.

A key feature of ECCNSW's work in the Energy space is to building capacity within the community sector to improve energy literacy, reduce energy bills, and help vulnerable cohorts participate in the transition to clean energy.

This year, in partnership with Ausgrid, the largest electricity distributor on Australia's east coast, the ECCNSW played a key role in ensuring that the CALD communities were well-informed about Ausgrid's updated electricity pricing structures introduced in July 2025, including the new two-way pricing for residential and small business customers.

Recognising that energy pricing reforms can be complex and often

difficult to navigate, particularly for those from non-English speaking backgrounds, ECCNSW collaborated with Ausgrid to develop clear, accessible, and culturally appropriate media communications. These materials were designed to explain the concept of two-way pricing and help CALD consumers better understand how to manage their energy use, reduce bill shock, and benefit from energy credits through informed behavioural changes.

This collaboration strengthened ECCNSW's role as a trusted link between government, industry, and CALD communities, ensuring that important information is communicated in ways that empower community members to stay informed and confidently engage in Australia's evolving energy landscape.

The ECCNSW Advocate also sits on Endeavour's Peak Customer & Stakeholder Committee and advises on effective engagement with CALD communities in the context of the next regulatory period.

As a state wide peak body the ECCNSW was appointed to be on the Consumer Consultative Group (CCG) to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). The role of the AER is to regulate energy networks by setting the maximum amount of revenue that monopoly electricity networks and gas pipelines can earn from customers. It is one of the three major market bodies that oversee national electricity and gas markets

ECCNSW will continue to have a voice on the various business customer councils and on the AER to provide CALD specific advice and guidance.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

SPEAK MY LANGUAGE (DISABILITY) PROGRAM

SNAPSHOT

- Number of years the Program has been delivered: **6**
- Number of Partnerships nationally: **9**
- Number of Storytellers sharing their story in 2024-25: **52**
- Number of podcasts to date: **536**
- Number of languages included in the Program to date: **29**

Now in its sixth year of national funding, the *Speak My Language (Disability)* program continues to share the lived experiences of culturally diverse Australians living well with a disability. Led by the Ethnic Communities' Council of New South Wales, the program is the first to ever be delivered via an historic partnership between all State and Territory Ethnic and Multicultural Communities' Councils across Australia.

In collaboration with SBS Audio and NITV, the Program launched a landmark national series featuring conversations with First Nations Australians living with disability. From December 2024, seven storytellers shared insights on accessible recreation, education, and employment – covering everything from blind fishing and parasports to peer-led poetry workshops and intersectional advocacy. Within its first month, the series drew over 6,300 unique visitors to the NITV podcast pages.

The success of the NITV partnership has ensured its continuation into 2025, with a further seven interviews planned with First Nations storytellers across Australia.



Larrakia elder and Speak My Language Storyteller Richard Fejo (Uncle Richie)

Speak My Language (Disability) also continued to build on its successful radio strategy to tap into Australia's multicultural communities. In 2024-25, a total of 16 community radio stations were engaged to broadcast storyteller content, delivering 265 episodes to audiences in Hindi, Sinhala, Cantonese, Nepali, and Korean. This strategy ensured the Program maintained strong connections with ethnic and community broadcasters while promoting inclusion and accessibility.

As the ways audiences access information continues to evolve, the Program has expanded beyond radio.



Auslan Storyteller Sokong Kim speaking with Deaf Australia's CEO Shirley Liu

For the first time in six years, *Speak My Language (Disability)* included Deaf Australians from culturally diverse communities. In 2025, the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW partnered with Deaf Australia to pilot a series of Auslan video-podcasts. Hosted by Deaf Australia CEO Shirley Liu, each episode featured a Deaf storyteller from a migrant or refugee community, discussing topics including Deaf sports, creative outlets, advocacy, accessible education, and employment.

The first episode premiered on 13 April 2025, Auslan Day, via the Program's Facebook and YouTube channels. By July 2025, the series collectively reached 12,906 views on Facebook, demonstrating strong engagement with this new format.

Over the past six years, audience preferences have shifted dramatically. The Program's 2024 national audience survey revealed that 54% of participants now access in-language content via social media, while only 2.6% rely on CALD radio stations. This highlights the importance of adapting delivery strategies to meet communities where they are, primarily, online.

Responding to this shift, the Program has expanded its social media presence while promoting its existing suite of 500+ podcasts and producing new content tailored for digital platforms.

In 2025, over 30 new video-podcasts were produced in 15 languages, with Bengali, Burmese, Indonesian and Tamil included for the first time in the Program's history. Each episode featured peer-led conversations with two storytellers sharing their experiences of living well with a disability. Collectively, the series reached 15,758 views on Facebook and received 231 reactions, reflecting strong audience engagement.



Indonesian-Australian Storyteller Thomas

Overall, the *Speak My Language (Disability)* Program has reached 29 different language groups since its inception and continues to find innovative ways to share lived experience and practical advice about living well with a disability.

Recognising the ongoing impact of *Speak My Language (Disability)*, the Commonwealth Government has approved a further extension into 2026 under the Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Program. This will allow *Speak My Language (Disability)* to continue producing innovative, multilingual content across radio, audio, and video formats, supporting culturally diverse communities to access information, celebrate lived experience, and fully participate in Australian society.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

TECH SAVVY FOR SENIORS (TSS) PROGRAM

SNAPSHOT

- Number of information sessions delivered:
187 in English
219 in various languages
- Number of participants engaged:
1,113 English speaking
1,625 non-English speaking
- Number of Languages:
English and **11** various languages
- Number of Library locations across Greater Sydney: **43**
- Number of representations of ECCNSW: **2**

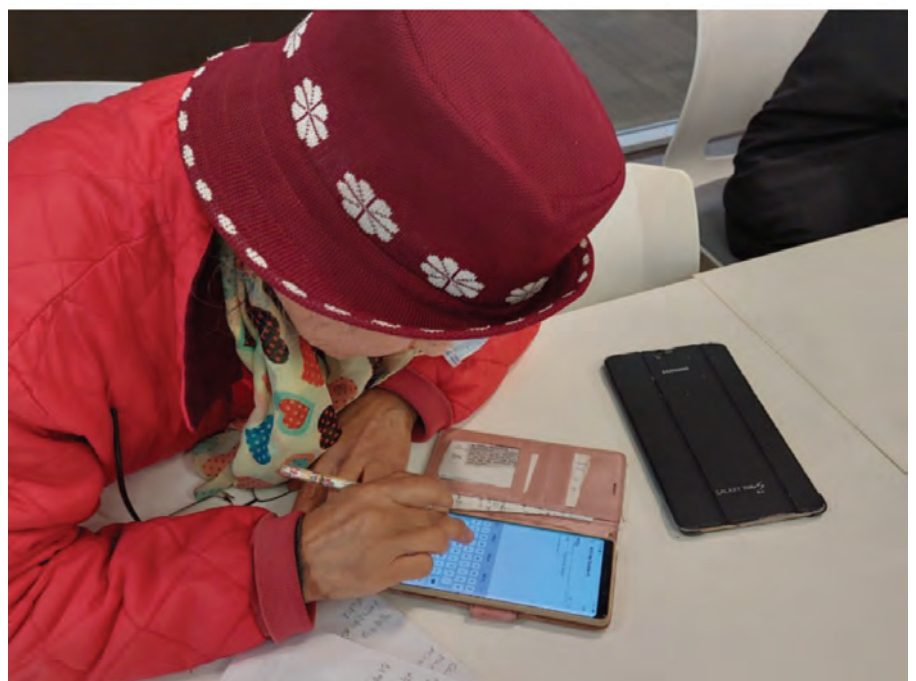
As the year comes to a close, we have much to celebrate in our achievements within the technology space. ECCNSW proudly delivered the 11th year of the *Tech Savvy for Seniors* (TSS) program. Our collaboration with the State Library of NSW (SLNSW), NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), and Telstra was further strengthened through our active role in the newly established governance group which has been convened to provide strategic oversight and collaborative coordination regarding the TSS program, reporting and quality monitoring and analysis of performance metrics.

A key highlight of the year was the strong participation numbers of seniors who attended TSS sessions. Participants engaged with great enthusiasm and a genuine willingness to learn. The TSS program continued to be delivered through a series of sessions, fostering stronger connections between facilitators and participants.

The participant survey results highlighted the importance of including practical content that directly supported seniors in their daily lives. Many respondents expressed that the Program's focus on everyday applications, such as online banking, shopping, and data storage, was highly relevant and beneficial, enabling them to apply their learning with confidence in real-life situations.

"I learned useful knowledge and methods about how to store data for future use. I also learned how to deposit money using a mobile phone and then make purchases. In addition, I gained skills in online shopping and understood how to make online deposits and use them to buy food online." Cantonese participant from Burwood library

The dedication and commitment of the ECCNSW Bilingual Educators is to be commended. Their ability to engage participants and meet them at their point of need during the TSS



TSS participant from Chatswood library

sessions has been invaluable. Their professionalism and willingness to be flexible and pursue the latest and most up to date Information and Technology (IT) skills and knowledge, particularly in the areas of artificial intelligence and cyber security needs to be acknowledged.

This year also marked a milestone as the TSS Program was introduced to the Nepalese community in the Rockdale area. Seniors were able to build on their digital skills and connect with others from their community.

"This marks the first session of its kind for the Nepalese community in Rockdale, and it was a significant milestone. He participants were extremely engaged and expressed their satisfaction with the content. They gained valuable insights that will help them navigate and thrive in this increasingly technology-driven era. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and it's clear that this initiative has made a meaningful impact." Rishi Acharya (ECCNSW Bilingual Educator)

ECCNSW extends its appreciation to the 43 Sydney Metropolitan libraries who embraced the TSS Program and so warmly welcomed our Bilingual Educators and participants from the following Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities: Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Spanish, Hindi, Khmer and Ukrainian who participated in the program this year. Participants were provided with the opportunity to build their technological knowledge and skills in this ever-changing world. ECCNSW's collaboration with these libraries has been an invaluable asset and has greatly contributed to the success of the program.



Tech Savvy for Seniors Program delivered in Nepalese at Rockdale Library

In the coming year, our Bilingual Educators are looking forward to accessing the newly developed TSS modules by Telstra. There have been strong recommendations in survey results from both the Bilingual Educators and course participants that more content be delivered in the artificial intelligence space, use of government apps and the constantly evolving world of cybersecurity.

ECCNSW will play an integral role in adapting elements of these modules into accessible, community-language resources for publication on the Telstra website. This will ensure that seniors from diverse backgrounds can confidently take part, learn, and benefit from the TSS Program, not only across the Greater Sydney area but also statewide and nationally.



Reporting scams online on ScamWatch

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

VOTE TALK PROGRAM

SNAPSHOT

Vote Talk Federal Elections 2025

- Number of attendees at sessions: **1628** face-to-face and **48** online
- Number of sessions delivered: **89** face-to-face and **24** online
- Number of languages delivered in: **10** (Arabic, Cantonese, Greek, Hindi, Korean, Mandarin, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai, Vietnamese)
- Number of community groups we collaborated with: **45**
- Number of Vote Talk stalls: **10**
- Number of locations across Greater Sydney: **10**

The Vote Talk Program is in its sixth year, and is another one of ECCNSW's flagship Programs. The Program has been delivered in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), for the Federal Elections and with NSW Electoral Commission for the State elections.

The Program serves as a targeted voter education and engagement initiative aimed at improving electoral participation among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. This year, the Program was delivered in the lead-up to the 2025 Federal Election from February to April 2025.

CALD communities often face unique barriers to electoral participation, including limited English proficiency,

unfamiliarity with voting processes, and a lack of access to culturally appropriate information. In response, the Vote Talk Program employed a multi-channel outreach strategy that delivered accessible, in-language voter education across New South Wales and beyond, that involved online outreach to CALD audiences in Western Australia and Eastern States.

As part of our targeted voter education strategy, a series of face-to-face education sessions were conducted in accessible and familiar community settings, including libraries, community halls, social gatherings, and local parks. This in-person approach was critical in reaching individuals who may not access information through



Information being delivered at a Vote Talk Stall at the Eastwood markets

mainstream channels, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

This model of engagement proved effective in building community confidence around voting, particularly for people with low English literacy, first-time voters, and those unfamiliar with the Australian electoral system.

As part of our broader voter education and engagement strategy, a series of 10 community event stalls were delivered across key locations identified as having high proportions of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations. These events were selected based on their relevance to target communities, anticipated attendance, and alignment with cultural calendars.

This grassroots approach allowed the team to connect with people where they were at familiar, trusted spaces and provided immediate, personalised support in a culturally appropriate way. The use of community events as engagement touchpoints proved effective in promoting electoral participation among traditionally underrepresented groups.

To address gaps in face-to-face voter education access in Western Australia and parts of the Eastern States, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) approached ECCNSW to deliver online sessions targeting CALD communities in these regions. This approach aimed to ensure equitable access to electoral information for those in geographically isolated areas or with limited availability to attend in-person events.

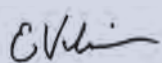
Furthermore, to maximise reach and accessibility, a multi-channel information distribution strategy was implemented, ensuring timely, accurate, and culturally relevant voter education reached diverse communities, particularly those unable to attend in-person sessions. This approach effectively extended the program's footprint beyond physical events and enhanced the impact of face-to-face engagement.



Vote Talk session being delivered to the Nepali community in a local community park

FINANCIAL REPORT 2024-2025

The abridged income statement and balance sheet for the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW Inc (ABN: 66 291 586 945) for the year ended 30 June 2025 have been prepared from the audited financial statement approved by the Board of Directors, who are responsible for these financial statements as well as the information they contain. The unabridged accounts and audit report by Meagher Howard & Wright may be obtained from the Council.



Mr. Emanuel Valageorgiou, Treasurer

Income Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	FY2025 \$	FY2024 \$
INCOME		
Grants	2,689,540	3,053,277
Interest Received	109,810	70,693
Membership Fees	187	4,078
Rent Income	106,170	104,871
Unexpended Funds Rollover	117,632	164,792
Sundry Income & Service Fees	474,456	714,237
TOTAL INCOME	3,497,796	4,111,948
EXPENDITURE		
Administration	629,234	882,940
Audit Fees	4,300	4,000
Bank Charges	569	459
Building Expenses	77,118	309,075
Computer, Support & Software	43,466	47,943
Insurance	14,851	17,796
Media & Web Design	45,866	21,836
Projects' Resources	117,678	140,127
Employees & Contractors Expenses	2,484,054	2,423,399
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,417,135	3,847,574
Surplus (Deficit) before income tax	80,661	264,374
Surplus (Deficit) after income tax	80,661	264,374
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	1,964,385	1,700,011
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	2,045,046	1,964,385

Balance Sheet

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	FY2025	FY2024
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,550,699	3,983,920
Trade and Other Receivables	5,017	83,756
Prepayments	16,730	14,851
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,572,446	4,082,527
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plant and Equipment	2,300,000	2,300,000
Total NON-CURRENT ASSETS	2,300,000	2,300,000
TOTAL ASSETS	4,872,446	6,382,527
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payables	194,161	253,426
Provision for Employees	242,004	225,849
Unexpended Funds Rollover next year	490,609	2,008,241
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	926,774	2,487,516
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Building/Vehicle Improvement Reserve	375,000	405,000
Total NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	375,000	405,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,301,774	2,892,516
NET ASSETS	3,570,672	3,490,011
EQUITY		
Reserves	1,790,000	1,790,000
Retained Earnings	1,780,672	1,700,011
TOTAL EQUITY	3,570,672	3,490,011

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Doukas OAM

Chair

Elected Chair in 2013 and re-elected in 2015 and 2019, Peter Doukas was the youngest ever Chair of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. He also served as Secretary between 2009 and 2013 and presided over significant changes to the internal governance structure of the organisation. These changes included the registration of ECCNSW as a company limited by guarantee. Mr Doukas is the Managing Director of law firm Denison Toyer, based in the Sydney CBD and operating mainly in commercial, administrative and estates law. He has worked in corporate governance since 2006 and has provided extensive advice to associations and NGOs around compliance and governance. He is currently the Chair of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia and serves on various non-profit boards. In 2020 Mr Doukas was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to multiculturalism.

Fiona Passaris

Deputy Chair

Ms Passaris has been an active member of ECCNSW since 2004 and was first elected to the Board in 2007. In 2019, she was appointed Deputy Chair, bringing with her many years of experience in leadership and governance. Over her time with ECCNSW she has served in a number of key roles, including Executive Member, Assistant Treasurer and Secretary, demonstrating her long-standing commitment to the organisation.

Ms Passaris is a solicitor and practises across a wide range of legal areas including property, criminal, family, estates, and litigation. She also holds a Commerce/Marketing degree.

Ms Passaris is a committed advocate for multiculturalism, women's rights

and social cohesion. She strongly believes in the importance of diversity as a source of strength and is dedicated to amplifying diverse voices and ensuring they are heard, respected and valued across all areas of society.

Emanuel Valageorgiou

Treasurer

Elected as Treasurer in 2017 and a member of the Board since 2005, he has served as Secretary and was Chair from 2011-2013. Mr Valageorgiou is an experienced NFP board director and formerly a senior executive with TransGrid, who also provided HR and change management consulting services to NFPs. He is currently the Chair of Multicultural Care, President of the Samian Brotherhood of Sydney & NSW Ltd, Treasurer of FECCA, and a Founding Director of Hurstville Glory Football Club, with extensive experience in dealing with issues related to multiculturalism, aged and disability care, and sporting administration.

Glen Falkenstein

Secretary

Elected in 2019 as Secretary, Glen served as the ECCNSW Youth Chair through 2015-2019. He is a Solicitor practising in the community legal sector, civil and not-for-profit law, and worked as a legal advocate for asylum seekers in Australia and overseas. Glen is a co-founder of the Australian Youth Parliament of the World's Religions and a former Executive Member of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

Joshua Moses

Youth Director

Elected in 2019 as Youth Chair of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECC NSW), Joshua has dedicated himself to the NSW Jewish community and the broader NSW multicultural community. Joshua is a strong advocate for culturally and linguistically diverse communities and is dedicated to combating racism and

racial hatred. He champions culturally inclusive work practices, supports special religious education in NSW, and is committed to safeguarding Australia's multiculturalism and fostering a more cohesive society. Joshua contributes his policy and education expertise to furthering the objectives of ECC NSW and representing the interests of NSW's culturally diverse communities to government and industry.

Joshua was a Director of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Vice President of the NSW Council of Christians and Jews, and Board Member of the Youth Parliament of the World Religions. Joshua was selected to participate in the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) Anti-Racism Youth Leadership Initiative, the National Student Leadership Forum, and the Youth Discussion on Social Cohesion.

Joshua is an education policy advisor in the NSW Government, assisting in the NSW Curriculum Reform. He was previously a government policy consultant, a high school teacher, and the founder of a local education start-up. Joshua holds an Honours Double Bachelor Degree in Secondary Education and Commerce and completed a thesis in educational policy and leadership.

Christine Lynch OAM

Assistant Secretary

Elected in 2015 as a board member and a Member's Forum member since 2012. Member of AHEPA Australia Ltd 50 years, served as national president 2013-2015. A member of the Greek Young Matrons Association since 1984 (raising funds for children's hospital and Greek Archdiocese), committee member of St Basil's Ladies Auxiliary for over 20 years, member of the Hellenic Women of Sydney committee raising funds to provide food, clothing, pharmaceuticals for orphanages in Greece.



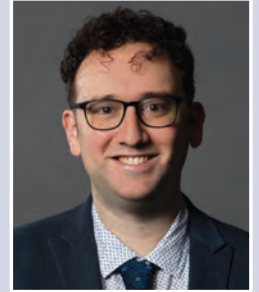
Peter Doukas OAM
Chair



Fiona Mouhtaris
Deputy Chair



Emanuel Valageorgiou
Treasurer



Glen Falkenstein
Secretary



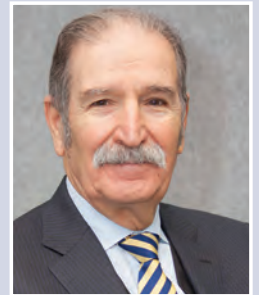
Joshua Moses
Youth Director



Christine Lynch OAM
Assistant Secretary



Ada Cheng
Board Director



George Bouteris
Board Director



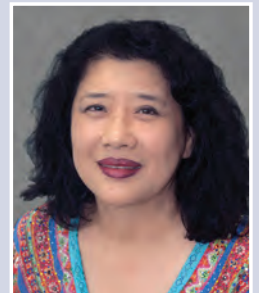
Amir Salem OAM
Board Director



Indarjit Khuman
Life Member &
Board Director



Sam Pashalis
Board Director



Suellyn Lin
Board Director



Abbas Alvi
Board Director



Siddique Panwala
Board Director

Chairperson of the AHEPA National Educational Fund Inc, member of the AHEPA Australia National Council, Secretary of the AHEPA Medical Foundation Inc. Ahepan of the year 2007. Member of the St Sophia Restoration Fundraising Committee under the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW, and a member of the Hellenic Lyceum. Attended Sydney TAFE Ultimo with Diploma in Floristry and Advanced Floristry. Retired business person.

Ada Cheng
Board Director

Ada Cheng joined the board in 2019, bringing over 30 years of experience in aged care. As CEO of the Australian Chinese Nursing Home Foundation, she has transformed aged care for Chinese communities across Australia, earning numerous awards both locally and internationally for her innovative strategies and excellence in combining cultural sensitivity with high standards of care. Her adoption of Geron-technology has significantly improved seniors' quality of life, demonstrating her forward-thinking approach to tackling the challenges faced by diverse elderly populations. Ada's impact extends beyond her organisation, establishing her as a global thought leader in aged care. In 2025, she was recognised as the Global Ageing Influencer in Singapore and the Smart Ageing Global Star in Hong Kong.

George Bouteris
Board Director

Elected to the Board in 2017. George has worked in the real estate industry for 54 years and has worked in both the Sutherland Shire and Inner West markets with LJ Hooker Marrickville and now Raine & Horne Commercial with his son Anthony.

George has invaluable experience in commercial and industrial sales and leasing, as well as development site

sales. Consequently, he has a wealth of knowledge of the commercial and industrial markets to draw upon to assist his clients in securing the best possible sale price for their property. George is a member of the following organisations: Property Council of Australia, Real Estate Institute of NSW, Board member of the ESTIA Foundation (Part of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese), former committee member of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Church, Gymea NSW.

Amir Salem OAM
Board Director

Elected to the Board in 2019, Amir brings over 35 years of expertise in multicultural services, including teaching and program management of the TAFE Multicultural Education program, and community engagement. He was also the lead tutor on a project that developed a training program for Australian businesspeople conducting business in Asia and the Middle East.

Amir provided training to Australian Business teams deployed in Egypt and worked as a bilingual tutor to a range of TAFE NSW courses, and has been tutoring a 'Cultural awareness program' for the Australian Peacekeeping troops, Department of Defence. He is also a Facilitator at STARTTS (Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) for its program, "Families in Cultural Transition".

His community leadership includes serving as Past President of the Australian Egyptian Forum Council and holding board positions on various community organisations and advisory committees. In recognition of his contributions, Amir was awarded the NSW Premier's Stepan Kerkyasharian Community Harmony Medal in 2023 and has been nominated as Ambassador for the NSW Multicultural Health for 2025.

Indrajit Khuman
Board Director

Elected to the Board in 2019. Served in various Board governance positions for over thirty years. Active in Sikh community. Established first Sikh Gurdwara in north shore Sydney. Passionate about multiculturalism. Performed over the years in Sydney Shell Folkloric festival. Former member of ministerial consultative committee. Chair of Care Worldwide, a community welfare organisation.

Sam Pashalis
Board Director

Elected to the Members' Forum in 2012 and as a Board Member in 2017. Mr. Pashalis is the Secretary of the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Belmore 'All Saints', and a Committee Member of various heritage and philanthropic associations. With a keen interest in understanding the multicultural foundations of our society, he is an advocate for the use of technology as a unifying resource towards that goal. Mr. Pashalis holds an Engineering degree and is employed in the ICT industry as a Senior Consultant.

Suellyn Lin
Board Director

Elected in 2015, 2017, and 2022, Ms. Lin serves as Managing Director of OZ PACIFIC PL and is designated as a Quarantine Accredited Person in her import and distribution business. Her community involvement encompasses various roles, including President of the Taiwanese Women's Association, community Honorary Advisor, and multicultural advisor to several Chinese associations. She is the Founder and Chair of Multicultural Alliance Australia.

Ms. Lin displays her commitment to exploring diverse ethnic histories and cultures. Currently, she is a featured writer for a Chinese newspaper. Ms. Lin makes advancing multiculturalism in Australia her lifelong mission.

Abbas Alvi**Board Director**

Elected in 2012, Abbas is a seasoned professional with expertise in international marketing and a strong record of fostering unity, interfaith dialogue, and multicultural collaboration. He is the founder and former president of the Australia India Chamber of Commerce NSW (now the Australia India Business Council), director of We Australians Are Creative Inc., and board member of the Mount Druitt Community Agency. Abbas also serves as president of the Indian Crescent Society of Australia and sits on the Advisory Subcommittee of Blacktown. A dynamic community networker, he is a committed advocate for environmental sustainability and renewable energy.

Siddique Panwala**Board Director**

Siddique Panwala is the Principal Solicitor at Unisaj Legal, providing legal assistance in the areas of family law, domestic violence, immigration, and conveyancing.

Beyond his work at Unisaj Legal, Siddique has played a significant role in community advocacy and multicultural engagement. He served as Treasurer of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) and legal adviser to numerous community organisations, including the Indian Crescent Society of Australia, Vedic Parisad - Australia, AUSPAK Women Association, Suhag Charity, and the Australian Peace and Harmony Association.

MEMBERS' FORUM 2024-2025

Abbas Alvi
 Ada Cheng
 Amir Salem OAM
 Arbin Lal
 Christine Lynch OAM
 Con Pavlou
 Emanuel Valageorgiou
 Fiona Passaris
 Fotini Loukis
 George Bouteris
 Georgia Anastasopoulos
 Glen Falkenstein
 Indarjit Khuman
 Irene Passaris
 Vale Jack Passaris OAM
 Joshua Moses

Maria Georgiou
 Maria Lillis
 Maria Markos
 Mary Karras
 Patrice Laskas
 Patty Markos
 Paul Tsanis
 Peter Doukas OAM
 Peter Onisforou
 Sajana Nand
 Sam Pashalis
 Siddique Panwala
 Steve Mouhtaris
 Suellyn Lin
 Vasiliki Laskas

Life Membership Bestowed

Vale George Wojak AO, MBE
 Vale Eddie Raiss
 Ross Tzannes AM
 Angela Chan
 Vale Jack Passaris OAM
 Vale Ian Lacey AM
 Josie Lacey OAM
 Vale George Varughese
 Vale Anthony Pun OAM
 Indarjit Khuman
 Vale Jon Soemarjono
 Mahrukh Batliwalla

STAFF

Staff List

Mary Karras

Chief Executive Officer and
Company Secretary

Marina Antonas

Inner West Sector Support
Development and Training Officer

Natalie Phan

Inner West Sector Support
Development and Training SSD
Support Officer

Vanessa Papastavros

National Program Manager
Speak My Language (Disability)

Esther Lozano

Digital Communications

Louise Easson

Media and Communications

Mariette Mikhael

Project Coordinator
(Until Feb 2025)

Christine Ahn

Project Coordinator

Vivianne Yerlikaya

Project Coordinator

Patricia Vaz

Project Coordinator

Iain Maitland

Energy Advocate
(Until Nov 2024)

Patrick Wang

Financial Officer

Karen Li

Administration Officer

Agi Ardizzone

Executive Assistant to the CEO

Rosa Stathis

Event Coordinator
(Until June 2025)

Bilingual Educators

Arabic

Anwar Yousif

Rageed Tater

Fida Al Haddad

Yasmin Ibrahim Mohamed

Cantonese/ Mandarin

Haiyan Li

Natalie Chau

Cantonese

Louie Leung

Emerald Ng

Greek

Antonios Ampatzis

Poppy Gerakios

Italian

Francesca Cutrupi

Korean

Misook Ahn

Annie Choi

John Kim

Insang Yu

Bo Kyoung Kim

Hindi

Ekta Sharm

Mandarin

Ye Lu

Jing Grace Lu

Jenny Huang

Wenyi Han

Nepalese

Rishi Acharya

Deepnarsingh Basnet

Dolma Hyolmo Sherpa

Spanish

Jimena Escobar

Tamil

Sami Adhikari Saravana Jayanthi
Purushotham

Priya Subramanian

Tagalog

Jenelyn Terkildsen

Roy Dequina

Thai

Kamonwan Namwongsa

Urdu

Andaleeb Shaikh

Marium Khan

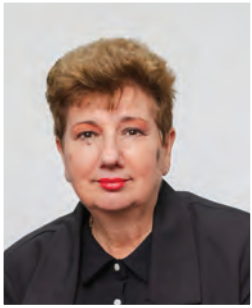
Vietnamese

Phung Ngo

Le-Tam Tu

Nguyen Thuy Le

**The Ethnic Communities'
Council of NSW thanks
the many volunteers
who give of their time so
graciously to support the
work of the organisation.**



Mary Karras
CEO



Christine Ahn



Marina Antonas



Agi Ardizzone



Louise Easson



Karen Li



Esther Lozano



Iain Maitland



Mariette Mikhael



Vanessa Papastavros



Natalie Phan



Rosa Stathis



Patricia Vaz



Patrick Wang



Vivianne Yerlikaya